



**434th Air Refueling Wing
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Fact Sheet

History of the 434th "Hoosier Wing"

The 434th "Hoosier Wing" has a 60-year history dating to World War II when it flew C-47 troop transport aircraft. The 434th was officially activated in February 1944 and consisted of four troop carrier squadrons and participated in the Normandy invasion of Europe.

The 434th and its flying units received the Distinguished Unit Citation and the French Croix de Guerre with Palm for transporting airborne troops, supplies and equipment during the invasion. The French Croix de Guerre was again awarded for numerous evacuation and resupply missions flown over northern France during the fall of 1944.

The "Hoosier Wing" also helped supply Patton's Third Army and resupply the encircled city of Bastogne during the "Battle of the Bulge."

After World War II, the 434th Troop Carrier Wing was reorganized as an Air Force Reserve unit at Stout Field in Indianapolis, Indiana. The 434th made the transition from C-47 to C-46 transport aircraft and in 1949 moved to Atterbury AFB, near Columbus, Ind.

During the Korean War, the 434th was called to active duty at Lawson Field, Fort Benning, Ga., and provided support for U.S. Army airborne training from January 1952 to January 1953. Four years later the 434th traded its aging C-46 aircraft for new C-119G "Flying Boxcars."

In October 1962, the 434th was mobilized in response to the Cuban Missile Crisis and remained on active duty until November. That year, the 434th Troop Carrier Wing was also redesignated as a Tactical Airlift Wing due to Air Force mission changes.

The unit was again recalled to active duty in 1968 and adopted a new mission as a special operations group for service in Vietnam. The wing and its new AC-119 gunship aircraft flew 1,586 combat missions. The 434th returned home in May 1969 and later that year was deactivated.

On January 15, 1971, the 434th was reactivated at Grissom AFB, Ind., as a special operations wing, flying A-37 aircraft. Two years later the wing was redesignated as the 434th Tactical Fighter Wing with a new tactical air operation mission. In April 1981, the 434th received the A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft.

The wing maintained its A-10 fighter mission until July 1987 when the unit was redesignated as the 434th Air Refueling Wing.

The 434th was recalled to active duty for the Gulf War in 1990 and helped form one of the world's largest tanker task forces. Operating out of western Saudi Arabia, the 434th and its partners flew more than 7,000 refueling missions, offloading fuel to more than 25,000 receiver aircraft.

During the Gulf War, 434th Hoosier wing members earned three bronze stars and 29 Air Medals in addition to numerous commendation medals.

In June 1992, the 434th Air Refueling Wing and the 930th Fighter Group (another Air Force Reserve unit located at Grissom AFB), merged to form the first ever reserve composite wing. This new unit, the 434th Wing, consisted of KC-135 Stratotanker and A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft and was responsible for aerial refueling and close air support missions.

Changes in the Air Force mission led to the unit being reorganized once again. In 1994, the unit's A-10 squadron was deactivated and the unit reverted to the 434th Air Refueling Wing.

Most recently, the 434th Air Refueling Wing has traveled to such countries as Panama, Iceland, England, France, Italy, Australia, Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Venezuela to participate in exercises and front-line operations.

During the December 1993 to February 1997 time period, the wing staged four separate deployments to Europe to support Operation Decisive Endeavor, the United Nation's enforcement of the no-fly zone over war-torn Bosnia. Deployment sites included Istres, France; Aviano, Italy, and Pisa, Italy. During one such 30-day deployment, the unit flew 178 aerial refueling missions and offloaded 8,975,000 pounds of fuel to 1,237 receiver aircraft.

In May 1999, the 434th ARW was called upon to provide aerial refueling support to Operation Allied Force. More than 200 personnel and eight aircraft were deployed to various European locations. Most recently, the wing was mobilized in support of Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom.

Current as of June 2004